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GRATIS.

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## LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.

LONDON: OCTOBER 16, 1915.

### A MILITANT INDIAN CREED.

"The Arya Samaj." By Lajpat Rai. Longmans. 5s. net.

NEXT to the rapid growth of Christianity—which had nearly 4,000,000 adherents at the 1911 census—the most significant feature of religious awakening in India in this century has been the spread of the Arya Samaj. The commonplace that great issues spring from small beginnings is well shown in this reforming Hindu cult. In the year of Queen Victoria's coronation a Brahman lad of 14 in the remote Kathiawar town of Tankara, Morvi State, was one night observing a 36-hours' fast in the temple of Shiva in company with his father and other worshippers. While they one by one involuntarily fell asleep, the boy by great effort of will kept the vigil. A mouse crept out of its hole, and not only ate the sacred food offered to Shiva but also ran up and down the image of the god. The boy's disillusionment was complete; the train of thought awakened in his questioning mind could not be stilled by the explanations or anger of his father. He definitely broke with image worship, and, when arrangements were being made by his parents for his marriage a few years later, he fled from home. Wandering all over India as a religious ascetic, he was initiated after years of probation into the highest order of Sannyasis.

Such, in outline, were the external circumstances of the spiritual evolution of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who ultimately emerged into publicity as a Hindu reformer, and in April, 1875, founded in Bombay the Arya Samaj. This deistic creed is strangely based on the four ancient Hindu Vedas, which the Swami proclaimed to be not only absolutely free from error, but the supreme and independent authority in all things. He explained away the polytheism of the Vedas by denying its existence. The many divine names occurring in them he held to be epithets of the one true God. The Vedas, according to this teaching, have nothing temporary or local in them; while any scientific theory which is thought to be of modern origin may be proved to be set forth in these collections of ancient hymns. Mr. Lajpat Rai, possessing a Western education to which the Swami was a stranger, is hard put to it to uphold with thoroughness these extravagant claims. In order to support them he has to conjure up an unhistorical golden age in which "the ancient Indian mind" reached depths and heights in matters of religion and philosophy not yet won by the Western mind. He cannot deny that in the realm of physical science the European races are far in advance of the ancient Indians, but he claims that "most of the fundamental truths on which the super-structure of European science is raised were known to the Indians". Though he does not make the express confession, there are indications that he regards the doctrine of Vedic inerrancy as bound to undergo modification—when it has accomplished its purpose. The Swami's object in making these claims, he says, "was not to give the Hindu matter and occasion for boasting, but to lift him from the slough of despondency into which he had fallen, and to give him leverage for the removal of the great burden that lay on his mind". This talk of ulterior purpose is an unintentional confirmation of the belief, stoutly alleged to have been confirmed by the Swami in private conversation, that his claims for the Vedas were not matters of conviction but of diplomacy, and that he chose this particular superstition because nothing else would be accepted by the Hindus.

But the infallibility of the Vedas—as interpreted by the Swami—and the retention of the doctrines of transmigration of souls and *karma*, did not render the reformed faith acceptable to many Hindus in the lifetime of Dayananda, and now, a generation after his death, it still meets with very slight response in the provinces where modern higher education has gone farthest. It is almost entirely confined to the more



backward North, the Punjab, and the western divisions of the United Provinces. In the last censal decennium its numbers grew from 92,000 to close upon a quarter of a million. It is no mere coincidence that this rapid increase coincides with the development of Indian Nationalist sentiment. The Samaj has met the feeling of many educated young men in Northern India whose faith in Hinduism has been undermined by Western culture, but who are predisposed against any foreign religious influence. It has more recently made its appeal to the masses, as offering a large though not complete measure of emancipation from the Brahmanic caste system. Mr. Sidney Webb, in his complaisant preface, describes the Samaj as a potent spiritual ferment in Northern India, combining a "Protestant" reformation of Hinduism with a Puritan simplification of life and a "Roundhead" insistence on the development of an Indian intellectual life and thought.

The author, who is frankly polemical, devotes a chapter of his explanation and defence of the movement to denial of the frequent charge that it is anti-British, and quotes with approval the tepid statement of one of its periodicals that the Samajists "accept the fact of the British Government and believe that, under the circumstances, it is the best kind of Government that India can have". In this connection he has a good deal to say about himself, inasmuch as on the outbreak of seditious disturbances in the Punjab in 1907 he was arrested and deported under a Regulation of 1818 "without trial and without charge, and without intention to try or to charge", to use the description in Parliament of Lord Morley, who, as Secretary for India, to the amazement and grief of one wing of his party, was largely responsible for this vigorous action. Readers must judge for themselves between Mr. Lajpat Rai's ingenious arguments and the charges formulated against the Samaj by Sir Valentine Chirol in his "Indian Unrest", published at the beginning of 1911, and by the anonymous though well-known author of "Siri Ram, Revolutionist", published in the following year. But it may be noted that Mr. Lajpat Rai does not disguise the predominance of his Nationalism over his religious faith. It is not too much to say that to him the latter is little more than the instrument of the former. The various organisations of the movement are to be judged by the standard of "our onward march to nationhood". The prosperity and future of the Arya Samaj depends—not, as the "materialistic" Western mind might suppose, on spreading the light of the Vedas throughout the world and bringing men to the true faith, but upon "the reconciliation of Hinduism with that greater *ism*—Indian Nationalism—which alone can secure for India its rightful place in the comity of nations". Thus the brooding, contemplative East so often pictured for us becomes aggressively materialistic, and the unpardonable sin is not that of rejecting any jot or tittle of the infallible word of God, but want of enthusiasm for the ideal of an India free from foreign tutelage. "Anything that may prevent, or even hinder, that consummation", says Mr. Lajpat Rai as his final word, "is a sin for which there can be no expiation".

That the movement is not only aggressively militant towards other faiths, and aims at nothing less than to become the national religion of India, is clear from these controversial pages. Theoretically, its founder recognised that the doctrine of Vedic infallibility carried with it a world-wide mission, since it was the right of every human being to know and join the society accepting its creed as the Word of God. But in practice the propaganda is exclusively Indian. Mr. Lajpat Rai's talk of a world-wide mission contrasts oddly with his statement elsewhere that until the question of the attitude of the Samaj toward British rule came into prominence, it "cared not for the foreigner, neither for his conversion nor for his opinion". Until they found they "ran the risk of being condemned unheard", the Aryas "were quite content to continue their work of reform among their own people, and had no desire to attract the notice of the outside world".

While eager to receive converts from Islam or Christianity, the primary aim of the movement, as interpreted in this book, is to absorb the vast Indo-Aryan mass, which constitutes close upon three-fourths of the entire Indian population. Mr. Lajpat Rai assures orthodox doubters that, whatever may have been the case in the past, the movement "does not aim at any future outside and beyond the pale of Hinduism". He would have Hinduism adopting the whole of the teachings of the Samaj, or at least its spirit, as its own, "thus obviating the necessity of a separate propaganda". As Hinduism is not a propagandist faith, the author ought to have explained the meaning of the latter remark. He is evidently troubled by an historical fact he does not mention. This is the extraordinary power of absorption of reform movements which the Brahmanic system has shown since the distant centuries when, overthrowing the dominant Buddhistic faith, it re-established its supremacy. He knows, too, how skilfully it has always adapted itself to changing conditions, suffering many infractions of ancient custom, provided the more important restrictions are observed. He, therefore, tells his friends that *rapprochement* with orthodox Brahmanism must not mean the lowering of the standards of reform. While he wishes the Samaj to exist for Hinduism first and foremost, he would deplore its "being merged in Hinduism or in any other *ism*". Independence he declares to be "the charter of its existence and of its usefulness".

Mr. Lajpat Rai passes lightly over the schism which has sharply divided the Arya community for nearly a quarter of a century; and his quotations of authorities are skilfully extracted for purposes of advocacy. He presents the case for the Arya Samaj from within more fully and ably than any previous writer in English. But by way of corrective of his special pleading, the reader should turn to the dispassionate and scholarly account of the Samaj in Mr. J. N. Farquhar's "Modern Religious Movements in India", which has been published almost simultaneously by the Macmillan Company, New York.

#### THE ORIGIN OF ARTISTIC IMPULSE.

"Religion and Art: A Study in the Evolution of Sculpture, Painting and Architecture." By Alessandro Della Seta. 200 Illustrations. Fisher Unwin. 21s.

UNLESS we misjudge him, a considerable part of Professor Della Seta's book is directed towards proving that the artistic impulse in man, the craving to express aesthetic consciousness, never existed. He does not seem satisfied by concluding that utilitarian service was the first occasion for the manifestation of artistic impulse; he appears to wish us to believe that, because art first devoted itself to religious needs, therefore it was not art in the sense that the earliest palæolithic artists had a passion for form, "an aesthetic exigency surprising in so low a state of civilisation". Their drawings, he adds, "are now more correctly considered as a production of magic art". Again he says, "Art absolutely profane in origin, art born to satisfy the aesthetic taste of the spectator, art which seeks for expressiveness rather than for the material utility of its products, even if this be a spiritual utility, is inconceivable in human history and has absolutely never existed".

It is rather difficult to follow Professor Della Seta's argument. For if he denies the innate human craving for aesthetic expressiveness and perfection, how does he propose to account for the advance of art? Obviously, if a machine-like utility had been the sole ambition of the cave draughtsmen they would have stopped short with whatever satisfied popular demand. As far as we can tell the palæolithic art known to us represents centuries of varying experience and achievement. Its highest level was reached, according to reasonable computation, in the Magdalenian Period, to which belongs the famous Wild Boar of Altamira. The evidence of strata seems to prove that such mas-

tery of form, and, if we may say so, such gusto in the use of line were attained only after unknown years of cumulative endeavour. If Della Seta wishes to suggest that pure love of drawing is not conspicuous in this Boar, and in the Lorthet "Reindeer and Salmon", he is not qualified to write on matters of draughtsmanship. On the other hand, if, as we must assume, he here recognises the craftsman's delight in technique, no matter how inferior that technique be in relation to later mastery, how does he account for it if in the same breath he denies the possibility of artistic impulse in man? And if he admits the inherent aesthetic craving of humanity, why these tears?

In her preface to this book Mrs. Arthur Strong remarks that it is "a reaction from the once potent doctrine of *Kunstwollen*, which represents plastic form from its earliest beginnings as the result of an inherent impulse towards artistic creation, as though the cave-dwellers of Altamira had broken the tedium of long winter evenings by producing, out of their love of art, animal paintings à la Paul Potter". This certainly suggests that Della Seta, not to mention Mrs. Strong, has little faith in an original inherent impulse towards artistic creation. But we are free to ask why it is legitimate to credit Paul Potter with such a temperament and not Peter Palæolith. Are we to postulate a sudden special creation of the artistic impulse, analogous to Adam's abrupt appearance? For our part we are ready to believe that in essentials the Altamira artists were much about the same as any artists, and that what holds good for Turner, Leonardo, or Phidias holds good for them. That is to say, they were people more highly developed in certain ways than their fellows and their patrons: that they executed the commissions given them always with a little more in reserve than was demanded of them. Over and above their interest in the subject as given them by their patron they had a private world of interest, unguessed by those they catered for. That their art owed its existence to religion is as true as that gunpowder owes its explosive nature to guns. Just as powder had detonant properties before it served artillery, so even the crudest palæolithic scribblers had something of artistic consciousness latent in them. That "the art of ornamentation owes its existence chiefly to religion", as Della Seta states, can only be believed when the inborn sensitiveness to rhythm, recognised in animals as well as savages, has been explained away.

However this may be, and it seems little more than an academic discussion, the question might occur to one, What, after all, is the value of Della Seta's analysis of art? Granted that his book is extremely learned and thorough, may it not be that he is using art in the least profitable way? "Greek art and literature were preoccupied only with the past, with the ancient lives of the gods, of the heroes and men; the art is mythical, the literature is historical." We wonder. If we could have walked with Phidias to and from his work, if we could have sat listening to his interchange of ideas with his brother artists or heard him urging on his men, should we have been specially struck by his preoccupation with the past? It is far more likely that what would have impressed us had been his preoccupation with the constant creed of great artists, no matter what their religion or nationality. This creed, which sustained, and yet sustains, artists in their necessary service to utilitarian needs, is truth to Nature. One has but to look at the great works of all time to recognise the identity of their preoccupation. The sculptor of the grey granite "Amenemhat III.", of the "African from Cyrene" (both in the British Museum), of the Parthenon Frieze and the Wellington Memorial in S. Paul's, all have this essential common characteristic, independent of race, religion, and chronology. Professor Della Seta, in labelling art as "magical", "mythical", "iconolatrous", and the rest of it, seems to miss the essential by emphasising the accidental. Religions and mythologies come and go, but life and Nature abide, ever challenging and escaping. We have

quoted Della Seta as saying that art which seeks for expressiveness rather than for the material utility of its products absolutely never existed. This is so false when we think, for example, of landscape, as to puzzle us. In the same way we find many apparently inexplicable statements, as that Christian art could not satisfactorily manage isolated figures, being rather driven to express itself in cycles of figures. This, when we consider Leonardo's, Donatello's, and Pollaiuolo's equestrian monuments, baffles criticism. The inference seems that Donatello ceased to be a Christian artist when engaged on a secular commission. Again, with the Parthenon Frieze in view it is difficult to see why "Greek art was influenced by its subjects to isolate its figures". Nor does our experience warrant the professor's theory that children draw not what strikes their fancy most, but what they desire to possess.

#### THE AUTHOR OF "MADEMOISELLE IXE".

"Lance Falconer." By Evelyn March-Phillipps. Nisbet. 6s.

READERS of the SATURDAY REVIEW should know by this time what we think of "Mademoiselle Ixe", the little story by Marie Hawker, or "Lance Falconer". It is a true and lovely bit of work, compared with which most of the showy and easy-clever and obvious second or third-class fiction of to-day should cut a somewhat shamed figure. "Mademoiselle Ixe" is the real thing. We think it should endure, but nobody knows about that; for Time holds fast the secrets of his judgments—Time knows too much and goes too deep for publication in the lives or generations of any author. As to the other odds and ends which Miss Hawker left, frankly, we do not think they will endure, though some of them are exquisite and all of them sincere. Miss March-Phillipps has drawn from the notebooks and unpublished papers of Miss Hawker, and certainly some of her extracts have interested the writer of this notice, because they are pale old records of people, of names, which chance to be more or less associated with his early years—"portions and parcels of the dreadful past", of the haunted and impossible past. How they will strike the public is another matter; and, indeed, we cannot suppose the people will be deeply concerned in private details about people and places it never heard of. How can it concern itself, for example, with the tenants of, say, Longparish House thirty-five or forty years ago, or with an entry about the Marchesa "Radiconi"? Now who, the public might ask, was the Marchesa "Radiconi"? How did she come into the life of Miss Hawker and into the neighbourhood where, later, "Mademoiselle Ixe" was written? And, to tell the truth, it is not material and not worth answering, even if by some odd chance one should know.

But the setting of the book, the countryside, is more to the point, and Miss March-Phillipps sketches it agreeably enough. It is a land all loveliness, absolute, unspoilt, sleepy England, with a matchless stream and deep-rutted lanes and great hazel and oak woods. Elizabeth Barrett Browning might have been wandering about Forton and Barton Stacey and the Wherwell Woods when she wrote "Aurora Leigh"—indeed, we have in imagination set Aurora in Forton.

This land was understood by Marie Hawker. It lives in "Mademoiselle Ixe" and in her "Hampshire Vignettes". She did not use it for "local colour", which is a trick, an artifice, of book-makers: rather she was steeped in it, so that the fragrance and the perfect freshness of it come out artlessly, unconsciously, in her pages. That is a rare quality in books. One is conscious of the same thing in Mr. Hardy's "Woodlanders" and other stories.

There have been worse books about books than Miss March-Phillipps's: indeed, books about books and their authors are as a rule a terrible infliction; either impudent or adulatory. We detest the whole lot of them, with a few rare exceptions. This one, however, is quiet enough and painstaking, which is something.



## THE PURSUIT OF BIRDS.

"Hill Birds of Scotland." By Seton Gordon. Arnold. 12s. 6d. net.

MR. SETON GORDON'S book has recalled to us radiant days in the northern hills he knows so well. He has recalled to us our own adventures on a burning summer day, with the golden eagles and their eyrie at Glen Taner; the song of the water ouzel whilst we have been intent on salmon in the bitter cold of an afternoon in the Highlands not much past midwinter; and, though he does not, as he assuredly should, include the grey wagtail among his Scottish hill birds, we have recalled vividly the lovely spectacle of these brilliant little birds about the streamlets and high cascades of Perthshire waters.

The pursuit of birds is indeed a wonderful recreation; and we believe that on the whole it surpasses the recreation of angling itself, though often the two are inextricably associated. Birds certainly add greatly to the charm of angling, whether one is pursuing salmon in the North, and watching, between the visits from pool to pool, the oyster-catcher or the sandpiper; or, along the south country trout streams, redshank in spring or wild and wayward green sandpiper in late summer. Mr. Seton Gordon has closely studied two species of which few people in this country know anything—namely, the snow bunting and the crested titmouse, and he is able to describe both in their nesting haunts in Scotland. Also he gives us capital sketches of the greenshank and the dotterel. Of golden eagles he has much lore, and also of the peregrine falcon. He considers the flight of the peregrine almost matchless, and truly it is a noble sight to witness one of these birds actually flying at and half assaulting the eagle itself far above the deer forest in the deep blue. We should have said, perhaps, that the three superbest fliers we have seen are the griffon vulture, the Arctic skua, and the Alpine swift; but it is perhaps a matter of fancy; and, indeed, can our own common swift be really surpassed in wingship?

When Mr. Seton Gordon deals with birds which apparently he has not studied personally in their nesting haunts he interests us less; for example, his notes on the sea or white-tailed eagle are not so vital as his notes on the golden eagle or the peregrine falcon: that is because he draws from other sources than his own experience. But unfortunately the white-tailed eagle to-day in the British Isles is as a nesting bird not much more than a tradition.

## A BOXWOOD FLUTE.

"Songs of the Fields." By Francis Ledwidge. Herbert Jenkins. 3s. 6d.

THE appeal of these songs, some of which are already familiar to readers of the SATURDAY REVIEW, is sharpened to-day as the appeal of the remoter countryside is sharpened, or of any far corner of life untroubled by the war. In reading them we are released from the present and again secluded among the late incredible years of peace. All that belongs to the past years has now a quality of reminiscence. The river or beach where once we were able to refresh ourselves we cannot now enjoy as a contemporary thing. "This", we say to ourselves, "is the place we used to frequent in that former life". We see it as we saw it in the past, not as we see it to-day. So with these songs; we seem to be listening less to the songs themselves than to the echo of a song whose charm to-day is chiefly that yesterday, when all was quite different, it chimed with an irrevocable mood.

Mr. Ledwidge is now a corporal in the 5th Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; but all these songs were composed before the war, and all are songs of the country. It was their rare merit to be really simple—simple in a natural and unstudied fashion—at a time when simplicity was desperately sought after, very closely studied, and very rarely natural. The simplicity of Mr. Ledwidge is not the false simplicity

of neo-primitives—a mannered aping of the tramp and vagabond, which caused fresh young men from Oxford to tie up their boots with string and suspect the good faith of any author who wore a hard hat. His simple verses are the spontaneous expression of his simple love of the Irish fields, and the feeling of these songs is sincere enough to take us back from the present fields of war. They distil for us the peace we have almost forgotten, before the blackbird's song was heard against the bugles. Mr. Ledwidge was really happy in the fields, not with the happiness of an escaped townsman, but with the happiness of one who has never known or been broken to the town.

Mr. Ledwidge plays upon a boxwood flute. It is an instrument he should covet; for an English poet has already given it to the blackbird, who is the most constant presence in these Irish songs. To spend elaborate criticism upon his verses would be out of keeping with their quality. It is their especial grace to be even, to flow without harsh pauses or sudden arresting of the ear. They are not deep or grasping. They are slender and fluent, without dropping into commonplace. To insist upon this verse or that, to point to any especial image or thought in them, would be an injustice to the essential roundness of their accomplishment. Mr. Ledwidge does not strike out single lines which insist upon the ear. He begins and finishes his song in the same key; and his songs must be quoted whole or not at all. This is a book upon which new readers must have the personal assurance of those who have already read. Neither quotation nor comparison will serve. Quotation is rarely just, and comparison is invariably foolish. Is Keats a greater poet than Shelley? Is Wordsworth or Milton the better man? These are questions which no wise person asks; and not the wisest person can satisfactorily answer. We shall not compare Mr. Ledwidge with his contemporaries, but say merely that we like his verses and look to him to fulfil their promise in happier years than this.

## AN ORIGINAL BOOK.

"Pointed Roofs—Pilgrimage." By Dorothy M. Richardson. Duckworth and Co. 6s. net.

ORIGINALITY adventures into strange lands seeking to gratify diverse tastes. It has been said: "Our writings are as so many dishes, our readers guests, our books like beauty; that which one admires another rejects. . . . Quot homines, tot sententiæ—that which thou condemnest he commends". Doubtless the author of "Pilgrimage" caters for her own public, for one that will acclaim her labours in the cause of fictional pathology. The book is a charted dissection of an unsound mind. It lays bare the workings of a sick imagination in a girl of 17 years. There is no plot, no love motive. Every interest is made subservient to the pathological. In the German school in which the scenes pass the Principal and the girls are viewed only through the medium of Miriam's atrabilious eyes. The picture is filled with faint emanations of her own mental disorder.

Sometimes, in scanning the catalogue of her external and mental impression, we recall the constitution of Marie Bashkirtseff—the youthful Russian neuropath of the late 'eighties—who wrote in her "Journal": "I am neither woman, daughter, nor friend! Everything finally resolves itself into a subject for observation, reflection, and analysis. A look, a voice, a joy, a pain, are immediately weighed, examined, noted, and classified, and when I have noted it down I am content". There is, indeed, the same intensely impressionable nature in Miriam, the same egoistic consciousness and self-absorption; but the coldly critical mind towards God and kith and kind in Miss Richardson's misanthropist has no prototype in that of the wistful Russian genius, who entreated the Deity that she might "make His acquaintance", who lamented her inability to put forth love because she was obliged to see "human nature through the micro-

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scope", who said: "Everybody is commonplace". Miriam, it seems, "could not think of anyone who did not offend her". "I don't like men", she says, "and I loathe women. I am a misanthrope". On the eve of leaving home she watches her sister dressing, and "reflects that she need no longer hate her for the set of her clothes round her hips".

Miss Richardson has achieved a conscientious work. Nothing is wanting to complete the verisimilitude of her creation but that touch of sporting divergence from type whereby Nature, the parent of type, is wont to mock at and defy transcription. Miriam in each mood is so rigidly conforming to type that—truth to say—she becomes at length more than a little wearisome. Her reveries are in point. To fall into reveries and to make self-speeches is characteristic of her unhealth. She must take account of the images that chase each other on the surface of her mind. Accordingly we have pages upon pages of foolish or fevered fantasies. Once, in bed and sleepless, when "the moonlight was sad and hesitating", she recollected, meditated, reasoned, through the space of some twelve pages in this manner: "No God. No Creation. The struggle for existence. Fighting. . . Fighting. . . Fighting. . . Everybody groping and fighting. . . Fraülein. . . Some said it was true . . . some not. They could not both be right. It was probably true . . . only old-fashioned people thought it was not. It was true. Just that—monkeys fighting. But who began it? Who made Fraülein? Tough leathery monkey. . . Then nothing matters. Just one little short life. . .

'A few more years shall roll . . .

A few more seasons pass' . . .

There was a better one than that . . . not so organ-grindery—

'Swift to its close ebbs life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories fade away;  
Change and decay in all around I see !'  
Wow-wow-wow-whiney-caterwally." . . .

We agree.

#### NOVELS.

"Guy and Pauline." By Compton Mackenzie. Secker. 6s.

**M**IRIAM COMPTON MACKENZIE has a flavour of his own, and for that he may be forgiven many things. But it is hard to forgive him his failure from grace in his latest novel. The book is thin, woefully thin, and not even Mr. Mackenzie's manner and mannerisms, his art and studied graces, can disguise the fact. The whole world may love a lover, but it is possible in fiction no less than in real life to have too much of the lover.

Mr. Mackenzie's lovers are a very trying couple, and while we are inclined to like them in the early stage we do not find them enthralling enough to be willing to follow them as closely as the author demands through the various stages of their amatory career. That long engagements with only a remote prospect of marriage are a mistake; that they upset the temper and the nervous system, is a pathological fact which any doctor can explain. Mr. Mackenzie, without explaining, describes the facts at great length, and invites us to look on at the gradual deterioration of a boy and girl whom at the outset we were prepared to like, but of whom before the end of the book we become heartily weary. We have another cause for complaint against Mr. Mackenzie. His novel is in the nature of a sell. He lures us on very pleasantly with the promise of a love idyll set in romantic country, with many beautiful scenes and some quietly humorous interludes. He gives us no hint of tragedy. But this promising tale of love's young dream develops unexpectedly, if perhaps psychologically correctly, on sombre lines, so that the final effect of the story is one of blank depression. Guy Hazlewood, the young poet fresh from Oxford, full of high hopes and romantic ideals, is a character whom readers of "Sinister Street" will remember meeting. Unfortunately Guy

Hazlewood does not improve upon acquaintance, and we resent his caddish compromising of the fresh and delightful Pauline. And in thus alienating our sympathy from his chief character Mr. Mackenzie misses his mark, and his elaborate explanations and analysis of Guy's sensations and emotions leave us cold. The book is amazingly, almost uncannily, clever. Mr. Compton Mackenzie has intense insight into the workings of the youthful mind. There are many brilliant passages in the book, and the characterisation of some of the minor people, notably Guy's pedagogic father and the bulb-grubbing Rector, is excellent. But Mr. Mackenzie has not quite got over his early tendency to preciosity. He writes: "Guy watched for a moment the cheek that was closer to his lips write in crimson the story of her love. He wished he could tell his love for her with even the hueless apograph of such a signal".

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"Sandy Hook." By Richard Dehan. Heinemann. 6s.

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A book which probes, however slightly, into the origins of a popular festival cannot fail to surprise and fascinate the casual reader. When the thing is done as systematically as in this small history, a net is spread to catch many nations, mythologies and periods. Even those who already have some knowledge of folklore will learn here much that is fresh and diverting. The festival has deep roots. It is often the last thing to be extirpated. Christianity deposed great Jove but left the Saturnalia; and in the celebration of Christmas three separate ideals of Godhead meet together. The Yule-log is for Valhalla. The Tree is Yggdrasil, and the dispenser of gifts is St. Nicholas, whom mediæval Christianity invoked during a Feast of Fools, which in its pagan form rioted through Rome in Tarquin's day. Our own St. George is the Greek Perseus as well as a crusader who fought the Turk, and the hero of the Christmas diversion "St.

George and Turkey Snipe". In studying the persistence in history of our festivals, we cannot help asking whether the industrial revolution may not do what conquests, revolutions and conversions have hitherto failed to do. Are we as a result of mechanical civilisation to lose our festivals? Already the gracious interludes of the Middle Ages have shrunk almost to vanishing, being clipped to bank holidays by Act of Parliament.

"French Novelists of To-day." Second Series. By Winifred Stephens. Lane. 5s.

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"Attila and the Huns." By Edward Hutton. Constable. 1915. 6s. net.

"I want a hero," said Byron. And so, looking round for a subject, may Mr. Hutton have said. We do not think he is to be warmly congratulated on his choice. One would rather see infamy a passport to oblivion than to a monograph. But there is no accounting for tastes, and no doubt even the Prince of Darkness will get his biographer some day. He had at least—according to Edgar—the merit of being a gentleman, a merit none could claim for Attila. It is, of course, the Kaiser's remarkable utterance, on dispatching his troops to China, that has given the Hunnish potentate a vogue. Otherwise he might have continued to sleep undisturbed in the pages of Gibbon and of Hodgkin. You may read all about him there, a story redeemed by the distinctive styles of either author. Mr. Hutton, however, has seen fit to detach Attila from these impressive surroundings. The result, if not exactly imposing, is at any rate serviceable to such as want to know what there is to be known about Attila, without the trouble of digging it out of great authors. We have here a hundred and fifty pages of narrative, and eighty of the original Latin sources—Marcellinas, Jornandes, and Priscus, the last-named a type of the modern journalist sometimes known as "gossipy."

"Bodies Politic and their Government." By B. E. Hammond. Cambridge University Press. 10s. 6d.

More than half of this study deals with the dry bones of early history—we might almost say mythology. Any attempt to classify data deduced from such material can hardly be accepted as scientific by the modern school of history. Really to appreciate the history of a community one must know something of its political side, the actual life of the people and the motives that prompted their rulers. However careful the inquiry and however able the inquirer the poems of ancient Greece or the pages of Herodotus cannot be ranked as first-rate authorities on matters of fact. Mr. Hammond groups his bodies politic into pedigrees, seeking to find similarity of character due to family relationship. The essence of a pedigree is unbroken continuity. This is seldom claimed even in a collateral sense. One must read these tables as convenient summaries of interesting theories rather than as logical conclusions deduced from facts. We prefer the later studies, and, wide though the range is, few writers have achieved so compact a series of national narrative. Not the least interesting is the story of the Italian cities, the rise of Venice from the mud of the Adriatic, its trading ventures, exotic riches and final establishment of a governing commercial aristocracy whose natural tendency to political narrowness was well corrected by the obligations of colonisation and overseas commerce. Discussing the question of internal unification, and instancing England, Mr. Hammond rightly points out that English unification grew from within and was not imposed by Tudor sovereigns. With the last of the barons disappeared all feudal authority, and the Crown remained as the natural leader of the nation. Curiously enough Mr. Hammond omits the most essential factor in British unification—our insular position. Saxons and Normans really began to consolidate from the day King John lost Normandy. In the pages on "status" we are surprised to find the alleged letter of the Barons to the Pope in 1301 quoted as an authority. Two so-called originals of this letter were produced in a recent peerage case, and Dr. Round has dealt with the question of their authenticity in his usual exact and trenchant fashion ("The Ancestor", No. 6). There is doubt that the letter was ever written, graver doubt that it was sanctioned by Parliament, and no proof whatever that it was sent to the Pope. We have no space to follow Mr. Hammond in his "modern junctions of peoples". His book was prepared before Germany started out to conquer the world. Only the end of the war can tell us whether natural tendencies or outward pressure will be for the immediate future the strongest influence in moulding the states still to come.



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